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2026 Espanola Family Day Children's Winter Fishing Derby Recognized By OFAH



By *Rosalind Russell* - The Ontario Federation of Anglers and Hunters has recognized the 2026 Espanola Family Day Children's Fishing Derby.

As part of the official recognition of the derby, the federation will be providing fishing information packs and prizes towards the event, which is also being sponsored by an Espanola bait and supply store, Fishy Fishy Bang Bang with a prize board supported by Giant Tiger.

Organized by The Moose 99.3 FM - CJJM, partners include the Espanola Game and Fish Club, the Espanola & District Snowmobile Club, Noojmowin Teg, the Espanola Elks, and hosted at the Anishinabe Spiritual Centre.

The event is free and will be held on Monday, February 16th recognizing Ontario Free Family Fishing Week and Family Day 2026. If the ice conditions are unsafe, there will be some fun snow activities for the children to take part in.

Screenshot by Rosalind Russell

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Northern Credit Union Donates \$130,000 To 25 Communities



says supporting local communities is central to Northern Credit Union's mission of making a difference in people's lives, showcased each December through its holiday campaign with funds raised by

By Rosalind Russell - Three local area organizations have received financial supports as part of Northern Credit's Union Season of Impact Program – Giving for Good. Larry's Place Fresh Start for Men in Elliot Lake, Algoma Harvest, and Espanola's Boogie Mountain are three of several organizations to share in \$130,000 from the banking agency. Spokesperson Jessie Wright

the employees themselves. She adds this year marked the annual initiative's most significant impact yet, with donations distributed to 57 charities in 25 communities in Ontario. For the full list of charity recipients visit: <https://www.northerncu.com/givingforgood> Photo provided by Northern Credit Union and used with permissions.

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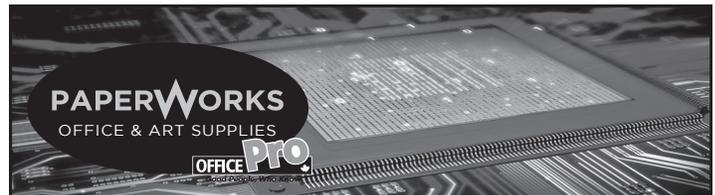
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Youth Café And Community Centre In The Works For Espanola



By Rosalind Russell - A Beaver Lake mother and her children are working on establishing a youth café and community centre in downtown Espanola.

Eva Luca and her family attend a local church, which runs local youth programs a couple of nights a week.

She says out of that, came the idea to open a café geared to everyone in the community, but with strong support for youth, and offering a meeting place for sharing common interests including arts, music and more.

She says with so much interest they have leased a space on Tudhope Street in the downtown, which has been gutted.

Luca says they are waiting on an engineering report and a rezoning by the town, which they hope to have done by the end of January, early February.

Luca adds they have set up a go fund me for donations to help with the renovations, and volunteers are also welcome.

To that end, the Koti Café & Community



Centre will host special events encouraging creativity and including a space for art in the back and a gift shop featuring local artists from the area.

She is hoping to have the café opened early in the New Year.

For more information, contact Luca at 705-618-9000, via email at: info@koticafe.ca or donate at: <https://www.gofundme.com/f/koti-cafe>

Photos provided by Eva Luca and used with permissions

The Township of Sables-Spanish Rivers Adopts Age-Friendly & Accessibility Action Plan

By Rosalind Russell - The Township of Sable-Spanish Rivers formally adopted the Age-Friendly and Accessibility Action Plan at a council meeting in mid-December, marking what Mayor Kevin Burke calls an important milestone in building a more inclusive, welcoming community for older adults, people living with disabilities, and residents of all ages.

He says council is proud to endorse the plan as a tool to guide decisions and investments in ways that support independence, connection, and safety for residents of all ages and abilities. Burke also extended thanks to the Ontario government for providing \$34,000 to fund the project through the 2024-2025 Inclusive Community Grant Program.

He adds the Age-Friendly and Accessibility Action Plan is available on the Township's website or by request from the municipal office.

Burke says residents, community organizations, and partners are encouraged to review the Plan and stay engaged as actions move forward over the coming years.

Espanola Food bank



An Employee and staff member of BioVeld North's made a donation of food to the Espanola Food bank in December. Photo provided by Allison Allard

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OBITUARY



RANCOURT - Gerard “Gerry” Feb 27th, 1933 - Dec 22, 2025. Gerard “Gerry” Rancourt passed away peacefully on December 22, 2025 at the age of 92, leaving behind a life marked by quiet faith, gratitude and commitment. For 53 years, he was the beloved husband of Pauline (née Bélanger). Their life together was built on companionship, loyalty and deep care for one another. Though they had no children, their home was filled with shared purpose, steady devotion, music, family dinners and gatherings. Dear son of the late Romain and

Alexina (née Lacroix) Rancourt. Predeceased by his siblings, Paul (Lucienne Latulippe), Juliette (Armand Ducharme), Fernande (Romulus Grondin), Raoul (Louise McLeod), Jeanne (Clement Picard), Fernand (Rolande Thivierge), Albert (Marie-Berthe Lauzon), René, Emilienne (Louis-Nogaire Plante), Lorraine (Clement Lizee), and Laurent (Thérèse Martineau). Brother-in-law to the late Yvette and Paul Landry, the late Anita and David Mazerolle, the late Yvon and Monique Belanger, the late Fernand Belanger (survived by Lillian). He is also survived by his sister-in-law Thérèse (Jean Huot, predeceased). Gerry found happiness in simple pleasures. He loved to sing and play his guitar, share his voice in the church choir of St.Jude's, and was often found enjoying music for its own sake. He took great pride in gardening, nurturing both his flowers and vegetables with patience and care. These everyday joys reflected his appreciation for life's quiet beauty. He will be remembered as a gentle and devoted husband, a man who lived simply, loved deeply, and found contentment in the ordinary moments that matter most. He leaves behind his wife, Pauline, and extended family, who will miss him dearly, but find solace knowing he is now at peace in God's loving hands. The family extends their sincere appreciation to the staff of the Espanola Nursing Home, who went above and beyond to help Gerry feel comfortable in his new home, as well as the staff at the Espanola Regional Hospital, Ontario Health AtHome and the Queensway Place for their compassionate care and support. Funeral Mass to be held in St Jude's Parish, Espanola, on Wednesday January 7th, 2026 at 10:00 a.m. A luncheon and gathering will follow in the church hall of St Jude's. In his memory and in lieu of flowers, donations may be made to the Espanola Nursing Home / Life Enrichment. Interment to follow at a later date. Arrangements by BOURCIER FUNERAL HOME Ltd, Espanola

COMMUNITY NOTES

Lee Valley Hall Music Jam – Saturday, January 10, 1:00 – 4:00 p.m. at the Grand Lee Valley Hall

Massey Area Museum Bingos - at Massey Arena. New start time, Mondays, 6:45 p.m. Dates: (Jan 5 is canceled.) will resume again Feb 2, Mar 2, April 13.

North Shore Quilting & Stitchery Guild: Next Meeting – Wednesday, January 28, 2026 at 7:00 pm at the Espanola Royal Canadian Legion. New members welcome.

Webbwood Eagles #4269 Spaghetti Dinner - Saturday Feb. 7, Mar. 7, April 11, May 2, June 6. Eat in or Takeout 4:30-6:00pm. Spaghetti, salad, garlic bread & desert.

Soup & Sandwich Lunch - at the United Church of Espanola on the 3rd Tuesday of the month, 11:30 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.. Everyone welcome.

Massey Legion Wing Nights - Thursdays 5:00 – 9:00 p.m. Wings, deep fried pickle spears, mushroom caps, onion rings, Cheese sticks

Meat roll-offs - every Saturday at the Espanola Legion. 2:30 p.m. everyone is welcome.

Al-Anon - Not everyone Trapped by Alcohol is an Alcoholic. Family and Friends are suffering too. Meetings: Tuesdays at 7, St George's Anglican Church. 213 Tudhope St, Espanola.

Free Community luncheon - at the Light House 2nd and 4th Tuesday of every month. 11:30 a.m. – 1:00 p.m. Everyone Welcome.

The Remnant Call Church – Service: Sunday 10:30 a.m., Espanola Elks Hall; All welcome. Non denominational.

Do you have a note for the community? We invite not-for-profit organizations to submit information on their upcoming events in writing no later than **Wednesdays at 3:00 p.m. 25 word limit.**
 E-mail: around@aroundandabout.ca



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